The Theosophical FORUM

JULY 1901

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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

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CENTERS OF FORCE.

For an instant of time I thought I stood on a volcano's brink, looked down into its fiery heart and saw the moulten waves mount upward. Again I was hurried forward by the cyclone's mighty arms, and I wondered at these things upon the earth's surface. The one an eruption on her physical body, but grand and imposing beyond words. The other a disturbance of her psychic body, grand too in its way, even while bringing fear and distress to her children. As I pondered over it all I remembered some teachings on Centers of Force of a finer and more subtle kind and I understood better the truths they revealed.

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THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE JEWS.

Hardly any Orientalist who writes about the Sacred Books of India can help falling into wonder and astonishment over the marvellous expedients adopted by the schools of the Brahmins to preserve the purity of their texts, and especially of the Rig Veda hymns.

We are told of the *Anukramanis,* or Indexes, giving the first words of each hymn, the number of verses in each hymn, the name and family of the seer of each of the hymns, the names of the deities to which the hymns are addressed, the metre in which every verse is written. Of these wonderful indexes, for the Yajur Veda there are three, for the Sama Veda two, for the Rig Veda one, and for the Athawa Veda—whose orthodoxy is hardly more than tolerated by its three superior brethren—also one. Besides these indexes, there are marvellously elaborated commentaries, including every single syllable of the text commented on, paraphrasing every single syllable, explaining every syllable. Then there are subsidiary treatises on the hymns that teach their pronunciation, their metres, and music—if I may use the word music for the voice-inflections that are generally called accents,—their relations, as sacrificial formulas, to the planets—as fixed and movable feasts; more supplementary treatises—the Brahmanas—that speak of the legends growing up around the hymns, the ceremonies they are to be used at, and a mass of details concerning them, which could only be represented fairly by quoting large portions of those books themselves.

Then again we are asked to admire the complexity and abundance of philosophic speculation that grew up round the hymns; the schools that were occupied with their forms and ceremonies; the schools that were occupied with their spirit; the legal schools that were occupied with their application to daily life; the old legal books and the new legal books; the old commentaries and the new commentaries, commentaries without rest, without cessation, without end; all pointing back to the hymns, all based on the hymns, all, in some sort, growing out of the hymns.

All these things, I have said, we are told with the greatest wonder and admiration, and we are expected to receive them with

equal wonder and admiration. We are told, what is undeniably true, that "the labour of the schools in the conservation of their sacred texts was extraordinary, and has been crowned with such success that the text of each school, whatever may be its differences from those of other schools, is virtually without various readings, preserved with all its peculiarities of dialect, and its smallest and most exceptional traits of phonetic form, pure and unobscured." The writer of this sentence goes on to expatiate on "the means by which, in addition to the religious care of the sectaries, the accuracy was secured; forms of text, lists of peculiarities and treatises upon them"; and so on.

All this is very wonderful, very admirable; but there is something more wonderful still.

In all I remember to have read on this subject, I cannot recall a single word, a single hint, that every one of these manifold and various precautions has its exact parallel in the means that were taken to preserve another set of sacred books that we are particularly and specially familiar with—the books of the Old Testament—the sacred writings of the Jews. So curious is the parallel between the precautions of the Brahmins to preserve their hymns and the means taken by the Jews to perpetuate the form of the sacred texts, that some account of the latter cannot fail to be of the highest interest to readers familiar with the former.

It would be out of place here even to touch on the earliest period of the Sacred Books of the Jews—the period that lies behind the Septuagint and the Samaritan Bible—the former about three centuries before the Christian era, the latter perhaps five or six. I can only take up the history of the Hebrew Sacred Books after the canon was finally closed, and see how they stood the shock of time during the last two thousand years.

The Hebrew texts had run the greatest danger of destruction during the invasion of the mad Syrian King Antiochus, and again when Jerusalem fell before the arms of the Romans. The manuscripts that survived this ruin of Jewish nationality were literally rescued from the flames. In the period of quiet that followed this storm of conquest, some eighteen hundred years ago, schools of Jewish learning began to spring up, as at Cæsarea, Lydda, Japhneh,

and, most famous of all, the schools on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias.

In the school of Tiberias the sacred writings were studied, commented on, their grammatical details painfully sought out and numbered, the traditions that had grown up round them gathered into orderly coherence, under learned Jewish Rabbins like the Rabbi Judah, the Rabbi Johanan, the Rabbi Akiba, and many more; and after this first great sanctuary of Hebrew learning suffered eclipse, the work of these men passed to others not less learned, in the academies of Babylon.

Hardly anything was studied in these Jewish schools but the Sacred Books, especially the five called the Books of Moses, and what ministered to the Sacred Books. Round these books of the laws of Moses,—the Torah, as the Hebrews called them—grew up a series of traditional explanations, called the Mishna, handed down from one learned teacher to another; and the writing down to this Mishna, or traditional commentary on the Mosaic Law, was one of the chief things accomplished by the school of Tiberias, under the direction of the Rabbi Judah.

And precisely in the manner of the Brahminical schools, this first traditional commentary gave birth to other commentaries, the Gemaras; and to these first Mishna commentaries, and the later Gemara commentaries thereon, was given the collective name of Talmud. Here are one or two Jewish sayings, on the relation of the commentaries to the law, quoted by the author of *The Old Documents and the New Bible*:—"He that is learned in the Law and not in the Mishna, is a blockhead; the Law was given to Moses by day, the Mishna by night; the Law is like salt, the Mishna like pepper, the Gemara like balmy spice."

Along with this collecting of commentaries and traditions,—which, quite inevitably, gave birth to a certain spirit of criticism,—grew up a critical study of the text of the Law itself. Even at this time a certain form of the text had become stereotyped; and these good doctors of Tiberias dreaded any alteration even of passages that seemed unquestionably and palpably wrong. Doubtful readings they marked with dots along the top of the line; and readings that were clearly faulty they corrected in the margin, though leaving them unchanged in the text. This great dependence on

the margin, it may be noted, has strongly touched the work of the English revisers, whose labours filled so much of the last decade's mental horizon.

Then these doctors hit upon an expedient already familiar centuries before in India, viz., counting the number of verses in every book, the number of words, even the number of letters in every division of their canon. These enumerations, recorded in their turn, took precisely the place of the Indian *Anukramanis,* or indexes, of which I have spoken already. Here is a specimen of a Talmud note on the Hebrew Law book we call *Deuteronomy,* as quoted by the author of the work already referred to:—"Rabbi-ben-Lakish said that three copies were found in the hall of the Temple; in one of them they found written Meoni, in two of them Meonah, and they adopted therefore the text of the two against that of the one."

Here is another curious analogy with India. It is well known that one of our great checks on the Indian Buddhist books, whether in Sanskrit or Pali, is the existence of translations into Chinese and later, Tibetan. In just the same way we can check the work of the Jewish schools of Tiberias by the existence of Greek translations of the Law of Moses, made in them by pupils like Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, who worked about seventeen hundred years ago. There are yet other translations from the Hebrew, of the same epoch, in Syriac and in the vernacular of the Jews.

With the writing down of the Talmud was completed the first great work of the Jewish schools; and this work was probably finished by the fifth century of our era. The next great epoch was the epoch of the Massorah, when the "Men of the Massorah,"—the Massoretes, as they are called—worked the material of the Talmud over once again, stereotyping, crystalising, defining, numbering, noting.

For us, the typical work of the Massoretes is a phonetic one,—the addition of vowels to the formerly vowelless Hebrew; but they did much more, besides inventing the Massoretic vowel-points. They regulated minutely the books, sections, verses, words, letters, and accents; they recorded conjectural readings and emendations; they recorded the parts of the text where anything was supposed to have been added, left out, or altered; they marked all words that seemed to them peculiar or unusual.

In the matter of recording and counting, they probably went further than all the other scholiasts since the beginning of literary history; they counted how often the same word occurs at the beginning, middle, and end of verses; they counted, not only all the verses, words, and letters of the Books of the Law, they went further, and curiously ascertained the middle verse, the middle word, the middle letter, of each book of the Law and of the whole Law, and invented mnemonics to preserve this not very useful knowledge. Thus, a letter in the forty-second verse of the eleventh chapter of what we call Leviticus, in the Hebrew text, the middle letter of the Law; three words in the sixteenth verse of the preceding chapter are the middle words; the eighth verse in the eighth chapter is the middle verse.

The same statistics exist for each of the separate books. Then the letter Aleph, or A., occurs 42,377 times; the letter Beth, or B., occurs 35,218 times, and so on; and all these statistics are woven into anagrams and mnemonic verses.

Then the Massoretes made marginal notes, recording rare words and words occurring once, twice, three, or four times only. So superstitious was their care, that when through the carelessness of the scribe, a word was written twice in the text, they did not venture to erase it, but simply noted in the margin "that though written, it was not to be read." There are eight instances of this sort in the Hebrew books.

About nine hundred years ago, the work of the Massoretes came to a close, with the result that, at that time and ever since, the Hebrew text is practically without variation of readings, the very result, it will be noted, which Professor Whitney asserted to be the result of the work of the Brahminic doctors.

So that, in the case of the Jewish, as of the Brahminical sacred books, there exist and have existed for a great many centuries, a profoundly reverenced text, specially safeguarded by all kinds of indexes, lists, enumerations, descriptions; a series of commentaries, and commentaries upon commentaries, which cover the phonetic and grammatical, as well as the legal and religious character of the sacred books, in every detail; there are subsidiary works on pronunciation, legend, formulary, astronomy and ritual; and, to complete the parallel, there is a tradition of plenary, verbal inspiration for the whole of the sacred texts in both cases,—a tradition quite out of harmony with the accounts both sets of sacred books give of themselves.

THE INNER LIFE.

The inner life is silent. It is hidden. It is in its fullest activity in a place, or upon a plane so deep within our nature, that it seems impossible to reach it; and yet, like the pure permutation of spirit throughout nature, it is everywhere visible to the seeing eye and to the calling heart.

To speak usefully and helpfully of this marvellously active life, to unveil the least of its potencies, it is needful to speak very simply, to be articulate of its mysteries as if they were the affairs of the common everyday life. They are in truth just that same thing; but mankind has not discovered this truth. Such men as look for this life at all, look for it as if it were a distant and an unfamiliar thing. Unfamiliar it is; but by our want of interest, or, it may be, of hope. We seek afar, and we see a great shimmering in the distance; then we say: "behold the inner life, afar and shining too much for the common eye." We strain the mental sight awhile and then return to the everyday life, enriched by a sense of mystery and of beauty. And meantime some solitary worker, some patient soul toiling where no hope or help is, has found, close at hand, very sweet and dear beyond all telling, this thing divine and powerful, wearing the guise of a familiar experience. So those who name it are seen to miss it; and some who have never heard it named possess the thing itself. Not in its fullest powers is it thus possessed; but in its most helpful aspect relative to the diurnal life.

Shall we not consider its nature? The first thing that strikes us in regard to it is that the heart is the keeper of its door. What precisely, is meant by this? If we consider our isolation in the midst of life, we find that a certain thing prevents our becoming at one with our fellows. What is this? It is not our want of agreement with their views? Surely not that. For in society we have found those who agree upon most, if not all, important subjects, who are even in complete mental harmony through being of the same type and mind, and who yet are not drawn together at all by this fact, who are, indeed, more often repelled.

If we look closely into this question, we find ourselves rejecting one view after another, to come at last upon a factor which in last resort divides each from each more surely than the bolts and

bars of any prison made by hands. This aerial and yet rigid barrier is the sense which each one has of his own identity—the "I-am-myself" idea. Each feels that he is in very fact a something separate from every other. This idea must, in final analysis, cause the thought of difference to arise. And arise it does, on all occasions, when it is just the reverse of that feeling—when it is the sense, the profound and active sense of identity which is so urgently needed to draw men together. To this sense of difference we owe all the innumerable distinctions and divisions of the human world to-day—to go no deeper. Differences of sex, of sect, of station, of race, of mind, of arts, crafts and handiwork; of hope, fears and aspirations —the entire world is divided by these gulfs deeper than all the seas, broader than time itself, as we know time.

What, would you say; and do not these things then exist; are there in fact no differences?

I might make a metaphysical reply to this question, saying that spirit and matter are but two aspects of one thing, of The Unity, in the end, and that these and all differences, or differentiations, are merged at last into that Unity which is all. But instead I make the everyday and simple reply, that, for all practical purpose, these differences do at present exist, that we have them right here in our daily lives to deal with, and that they must be dealt with before we can make one small step towards the inner life.

See life as it is. Here we are. There is no getting away from that fact. And if we wish to get away from the sordid and mean thing which ordinary life has become to most of us, we cannot leap away from it to some other condition of thought, any more than we can of our own motion bound over physical space. We have to move away step by step. And where do we make these steps? In the mind. The mind is at once the mover and the thing moved. But the motive power, the inspiration, the will, that indeed comes from the heart.

Shall we now examine into the truth of this position? It has been thought that the barrier between human beings was one of wealth and poverty. Men have become rich who were beggars; men who had all the potency of wealth have descended into the arena of toil and of helpless poverty. Yet the barrier existed still.

Societies have been formed to anneal mankind and to annul the differences; yet the fatal, the eternal difference existed still. At every point of divergence, at each crisis where the paths separate, the one idea sure to arise is this: "we *are* different and agreement is impossible; you and I, each in his own place, are conscious of a fundamental and distinct isolation of experience and of view; we cannot merge our experience; we can never agree; often we cannot even tolerate, because to tolerate we must at least agree that there is no vital right or wrong involved in the action to be tolerated, and in most cases such question of ethics is there."

Our position then is this: We are united in many ways and upon many and even world-wide points, but at any divergence there arises from the depths of the mind this persistent idea; that we are separate and isolated, when you really come to the real facts of life; hence you must expect opposition and contention among men whenever there is conflict or opposition of idea. And this idea works itself out in our daily life, in our institutions and in all our ways and doings; surface harmony, surface agreement, but really and fundamentally an entire, radical and eternal difference so deep seated as to be the most persistent part of our being; the thing closest and even dearest to many of us; the thing we are most reluctant to part with even while it causes us the most poignant sorrow often—our sense of separate identity. How dear and how close it is, many of us have had occasion to see when we have noted that religions derive their greatest power to hold and to console from their assertion of continuous identity hereafter, and when others of us know that the greatest adversary of the teaching of reincarnation is the sentiment expressed in the thought that "I shall not be myself, the self I now know, when I return to earth." When some one who is burdened to the last degree by his or her personality, sorely tried in both body and mind, utters this idea, we are smitten anew with a fresh sense of the wonders and the mysteries of the human constitution as we find that even this martyr to himself cannot face the idea of a new life on this earth without the tormentor, the present self, at his side and life of his life. Without this self he does not know himself to be. And this giant among pigmies it is, this enduring consciousness ruling our other puerile and evanescent minor states of consciousness, which separates man from man and sets the bounds to

our fraternal relations. It is at the bottom of the cup of life, of the life we live and derive from, so far as daily existence is concerned, and we have to reckon on with it.

In all seriousness, we must reckon with it. For every purpose it is there and is not to be evaded. Shall we for that give up the search? Shall we yield the field to this power over all powers, the force of separateness?

I do not say so. Its existence must be granted. What one does not grant is its place, its preeminence. That is conferred through the error of man.

Side by side with this consciousness there exists another, whose main interpreter for the present is the heart. In moments of danger, of sorrow that we understand, of national calamity, in a word, in moments when the heart recognizes a common trial or joy; when identity of feeling and experience is discerned, then all at once there arises from some enchanted region of our nature—some realm of gentle beauty and power godlike in its immensity—there arises a resistless force which sweeps over all differences and merges men into one mind and heart as if difference never had existence outside a nightmare. This irresistible power is the sense of identity. It is the other and the hidden pole of the sense of separation.

These two poles of one consciousness are both useful. Each completes the other, The only harm that is done is done by separating them. In the evolution of life and of nature, differentiation is an absolute necessity. It is relative, it is never final; it is, only as every material fact exists, a vehicle, a makeshift, a carrier and an instrument of the consciousness. Its place is on the surface of life and not in the deeps thereof. In the deeps, and itself deeper than any, is that other pole, the sense of identity. We know less of it, because we are mainly concerned with material life; it is we who have relegated this power to the innermost place in our human economy. It is really not so far from us, being as it is, both outer and inner, both far and near, both divine and human. But we have heaped dust upon it in the limbo of forgotten things.

Suppose for an instant that we were able all at once to alter this state of matters and that, whenever any difference arose between men, the first thought to leap to the brain, the first power to

move the heart was the consciousness that we were one with our brother; that his need was our need and his hope our hope. Men might then conceivably differ as to methods but never as to the end to be sought. All the harmony in the world as to *methods* never really for one moment welds the hearts of men into a common instrument of consciousness; but a common experience, one touch of identity of nature, and we are united beyond the power of bodily and mental separation to sever us. That which is welded by the god in the heart cannot be severed by external things.

We see quite plainly that one pole of this dual consciousness has no more power than another so far as our present and daily life is concerned. But we have given power over us to the one and have held back from the other. We, and we only, can alter this if we wish to do so. Whether we wish or no, that is the burning question. For the sense of identity, once active, plays havoc with all our pet little distinctions and barriers and vanities: these are burned up as in a fiery furnace by the presence of the sense of identity. And then all the little lights that we plumed ourselves upon go out and we are left in the dark until our eyes grow accustomed to the great moon and the planets and stars in their light and at last the sun of consciousness dawns upon our restored sight and then real living begins for us and the inner life is both outward and inward and we are in the process of being healed and made whole.

There must be some practical reason for this changed state of affairs, do you say? Of course there must be. When we live from a basic, a fundamental and a radical sense of difference, so that what is valid for one man is not at all to be applied to another, then we live in a state of discord with the whole of nature. The universe, in all its departments, continually exemplifies the truth that there is unity beneath and within all differentiations; that the plan is one, while the details differ; that differing, they still tend to the same end and fulfill—beyond the specific purpose of each—a vast, general and common purpose, to wit: The evolution of the material universe and the involution of the soul-consciousness into that material thing.

And is this true in relation to man himself? It would indeed

seem that it is true of him also. What then is the next step along this line of thought? Is it not this: that if men were conscious that their first reason for life in this world is the common purpose of finding the soul within each as within nature, then the sense of a common aim, a need even, would come into practical and continual operation? At the least occasion of difference or dispute, this fundamental and real sense of identity would operate and not the sense of "I am myself and different from any other." It is that sense which, in last conclusion, plays havoc with all the affairs of this life and causes men to draw asunder. So we have only to replace that pole of consciousness with the other one which is exemplified by the words—"We are one soul"—to make and at once, a great change in the conduct of life. The inner life will resume its sway over the outer, and the outer will serve the purposes of the inner: for that inner consciousness is indeed the Soul.

We have said that we cannot all at once do this. And it would seem that the chief obstacle is in the mind: it is the erroneous idea, the false consciousness. If this be so, then relief is seen to lie in the direction of a change of mind; in what the religionists have termed a change of heart. This change will not spring up of itself like the weeds of nature, to wither at the touch of heat or of adversity. It must be brought about by daily and continuous effort and even toil. But the effort will soon become a habit and will thus be less toilsome. We have, at the outset to watch our minds, and whenever the idea of difference arises, or whenever we judge the case of another as if it were not our own case, then we must deny the truth of this false idea and fall to asking ourselves: "what should I wish if I were in the conditions of that other man; how would I then feel and how would I wish that a brother's love should manifest itself towards me?" A good guide; for while conditions differ, the human heart is the same in its real needs and sorrows, though it is one of the allies and the nightmares of material life and the sense of separateness to state that the reverse is true. Difference! Separateness! Superiority! Such are the pleas with which the inferior mind of man has always sought to justify its supremacy and to excuse its blindness.

It must not be supposed that this advocacy implies the exercises

of an emotional sentimentality. It would indeed be madness to endeavor to act as another would act or to think as he thinks. And indeed such action would subvert our purpose, for action in the material world, and thought about material things and life in matter, are still things of the material and the separate, the differentiated existence, and all the mental unity in the world on these heads would not bring men any nearer together in heart, nor remove the underlying sense of separation. It is a change of attitude which is needed and not identity of thought and act upon things of the material life. When we come to the things of the inner, the soul life, then indeed we do find identity of thought and of right action, but such belong to a more exalted plane of life, where unity prevails to a far greater extent than is known to us here. And in the meantime what is wanted, and what goes to the root of the matter, is the feeling which can best be expressed by the utterance that I am, not my brother's keeper, but his very self. That we are sparks of one soul, having one aim in existence, whether consciously so or not; and that while we may differ in regard to everything else, and even in regard to this truth, yet that charity whose real name is love shall inform the whole. With love and with trust we go a long way. We accept differences of thought and of action as necessary but not vital, and we hold to the vital part which is the spirit of entire good will due to our fellowship in the soul—in all, that is to say, which is of any lasting import.

Conceive for one moment what a radical change such an attitude would make in life. In the first place it would lead to a very real interest in the point of view of every other human being, for might not the common and underlying soul be speaking through him at the time? At all events what does continually speak through every act and word of his is the experience of the human soul in matter, and the grade of consciousness which it is enabled to use at the time: we see its earthly fetters and the poverty of its present vehicle and we are moved with compassion at the thought. We too are not the instrument which we should be to the soul. Information with regard to the soul and how it fares on its errand, its difficulties and its aids is to be had at every turn of the road: this consideration may well make us tolerant of the views which afford us such in-

struction and which have some likeness within ourselves. The moment we grant that we are all here for the purposes of the soul, that moment contention and argument are replaced by an interest in all that can afford information in regard to the path, the vehicle and the hidden thing moved by the breath of spirit—the soul. Good fellowship and a cordial entente would then replace the sense of separateness, and each would look to each for information and aid upon the journey: these would not need to be consciously imparted to be of value: every real experience is of value, for each teaches something of life and of human nature, the vehicles of the soul.

Let us then assume that the initial effort is begun. We at once watch the mind and strike at every thought of separateness. We are at once almost appalled to find that we have hardly ever had another thought. But this need not bring dismay. We need only smile and proceed upon our task. The very fact that we do see ourselves as being so deeply rooted in a sense of separation is a great help, for we see how far we are from the right road, and this is less dangerous than the idea that we are not so far wrong after all. It is easier to turn sharply round and to retrace our steps than to flounder around in the near dimness, thinking that the goal is just around the corner. So we turn right face about, and to every idea of difference we quietly repeat within the formula, that we are in essence the same as every other man and that therefore we will look for points of identity: we ask ourselves what we would do in the place of others, and we find that, given our human nature, we would do or feel much the same; that it is only environment or training or other circumstance which brings about difference of action. Thus we find a second point of identity (and a refuge from self righteousness, so destructive to the soul life), in our common human nature. The next step is the sudden perception that we can none of us trust to that human nature, so easily modified by mere outward circumstance, and the need of something more stable than this becomes all at once a yearning, a craving, a necessity. It is a ground of compassion also and we realise poor humanity, so bereft of a guide! And this again brings us to a sense of identity in a common trial. By this time we may assume that we are more or less trained to looking, a few times daily at least, at life in the light of another,

of his experience and his feelings, as well as our own. From this habit results a sweeter acceptance of life as it is: we carp less; we fret less; we assume that the way of another may be as good for the purposes of the soul as our own, that failure may compass the soul's intention as well as success, and with the sight a weight is lifted from life, from our hearts. We can sit calmly down and see the destruction of our own hopes and ideas and yet feel that it may be quite as well with the world and with ourselves as before. We lose the notion that it is of importance that our views of right and wrong should prevail: we do the right thing as it appears to us, but we do not enter into contention for or about it, and we are ready and even easily able to see that the opposite view of another may be quite as near the immediate necessity of the soul for him as is our own: we refrain from judging others lest we do in that act really presume to pass judgment upon the soul which knows that this is the next necessary step for our brother. Freed thus from the need of argument and contention, a great quiet falls upon the mind; the heart is more joyous and more calm; the soul has begun to whisper the immortal secret to us; the inner life has begun to rise upon our consciousness.

In this comparative stillness, free from all the harsh voices of criticism and of separateness, there comes to us a new experience. Words will not describe it. But it may be faintly imaged by the phrase that we feel at one with the heart of nature: or to say that we feel at one with the purpose of things: or that we feel to the very very core of our heart that all is really well with us and with the world. This is an experience of the peace which dwells ever in the high place of the soul: it is a reflection of that peace, bringing a feeling of well being and of happiness. And this happiness expands the heart, for man is always at his best when he has touched some pure happiness. The heart, thus at rest and expanded, tunes all the nature to itself. We find that the bodily and the mental vibrations are higher, are stronger and more steady; we are no longer concerned to vindicate ourselves, or to uphold our separate view, or to insist that any other shall see eye to eye with us. We do our duty as we see it, and are content to assume that every other is doing the same to the best of his present light and ability, even if this

does not appear to be so. The missionary mania, the philanthropic mania, the teaching mania, all are outworn. We let go, and are no longer worn with the cares of a cure of souls. We see quite clearly how foolish it would be if a man were to attempt to write a history of natural philosophy from the study of separate phenomena of nature as quite unrelated one to the other and to the scheme of things. And we see that such was our attitude while we lived on the lines of separate identity. We are able to laugh the hearty laugh of common sense and to let go of our superior altitude, coming down to the safe and sane plane of identity of soul amid difference of experience. Then, as we have seen, we experience happiness of the heart.

Now in this happiness a deep secret, deep upon deep indeed, lies hid. And words go but a little way towards it. But it is true that the ether in the heart, the soul spot of life, is stirred by this happiness and begins to move outward. This it was at all times ready to do; but time upon time we thrust it back upon itself until at last, not itself, but its vehicle, was atrophied. That vehicle is in part the personal consciousness and in part the heart force or life. We will not enter into detail, but will content ourselves with saying that this vehicle becomes more attuned, more vibrant and tense and that it more readily responds to the motions of the living spark within. Just as we once received a hint of the identity of humanity from the motion within the heart common to men at sight of some great wave of feeling, so now we get a view of the identity of all nature from these outgoings of the heart to the other denizens of the universe. We learn the identity of the creatures; of the stars; of the three worlds and their lives with our own life. Sweet and strange are the secrets whispered into our ear. And we pay no price, yet they are only whispered on the condition of a feeling of identity: if there be no response to that, the divine teaching is withdrawn and withheld until the condition is complied with at the next call. "Dost thou believe," whispers the voice, "dost thou believe that thou are brother to the stars and kin to the worm?" And if the heart falter not but if it smile at the thought, then the voice speaks of other and more definite things. That there is a scientific as well as a moral base to the scheme of things, no man can doubt

who goes one step upon the way of the inner life, but it is not always the case that both aspects are learned at the same time. I say "learned" advisedly: that both are included in the one teaching is undoubted, and it is for the hearer to discern both aspects; but this he is not always able to do. The force emitted by the heart has at all times its exact numerical vibratory rate, and observation of this would unlock the secrets of that special order of existence; at the least one can note the recurrence of the same order and kind of feeling and note that there is a relation between even the apparently different things which excite this same order of feeling. But if this be not done, the moral order does not escape us; we are enriched by the gradually growing and living knowledge that the soul is one and that we are that soul. This knowledge permeates, by degrees, our entire life and changes all its modes of thought and action. When this is done we are ready for higher teaching. And in the inner life, the empty cup, upheld, is always filled. With this clue of identity close and warm in our hearts, we soon find an amazing interest and fullness in life. In the interior sanctum many strange and vivid experiences are undergone. And so great is the interest and the happiness, whatever the outer life may be, that the whole system is keyed up and vibrant with life of a higher order. Depressing influence and selfish thoughts have no longer their baneful sway. The inner consciousness finds its instrument responsive and ready to its touch and with what joy does it not arise and come into its own kingdom.

So the man who would become, who wishes to be rather than to know; he who would lead the inner life and go easily upon the path of the great becoming, he does not seek the *curios* of existence, but accepting the terms of the soul, with which nature herself has complied, with which nature must comply or perish, he turns the might of his will to cutting off, in the mind, the root of the heresy of separateness. While doing this, he is content to leave the next step to the soul within. He has no fear; no doubt is his. He has taken the first step and he has held up a fast emptying cup. His mind is that cup, and well he knows that the soul will fill the place made clean and purified, for he knows that a vacuum is unknown to nature and that what he keeps empty of lower forces must needs

be filled by higher ones. So happily and in a contentment which grows ever deeper and deeper, he bides the ripe time of the soul and of nature; he seeks no teacher, but he waits upon the hour of the soul and he shall surely learn of that soul itself. So he can afford to wait, and to wait contentedly, doing the small or the great things of his daily duty until the hour of sunrise. He is already—by virtue of his quiet waiting and his growing sense of identity—he is already living the inner life. He shall know it in its fullness, and long before he has attained that fullness he will know that words will go with us no further; yes, he will know that the inner life escapes speech always and that even its threshold is barely reached (and profaned), by speech. For speech is the expression, the entrance into the outward, while the inner life is turned toward the silence which is the spirit. Thus the man learns not to speak of the inner life, but only to give it expression in the outer life by his kind deeds and his charity and compassion: he becomes that inner life himself as he more and more becomes identified with the soul.

WHAT SCIENCE SAYS.

Reprinted from "The Theosophist," June, 1901.

Last Friday evening a lecture of immense interest to students of the "Secret Doctrine" was delivered by Prof. J. J. Thomson, at the Royal Institution in Albemarle St. The subject was the sub-division of atoms, and among the audience were more than a dozen members of the Theosophical Society eager to hear what science had to say in confirmation of the teachings of occult physics. Professor Thomson's lecture was largely occupied in going over the ground made more or less familiar by his recent work on "The Discharge of Electricity through Gases," and was illustrated by numerous experiments. Continuing the line of investigation inaugurated years ago by Sir Wm. Crookes, Prof. Thomson has satisfied himself of the existence of matter in a much finer state of sub-division than the so-called atom of the chemist. The *ionisation,* as this process of sub-division is called, is effected by discharging an electric current through an exceedingly high vacuum. From the Cathode, or negative pole, there proceeds a stream of these infinitely minute particles, negatively charged with electricity, endowed with a wonderfully penetrative power. Closely associated with the investigations into the characteristics of these particles or *ions,* is all the range of phenomena belonging to what are known as the Becquerel Rays, the extraordinary properties of which have been studied by M. Henri Becquerel, M. and Mme. Curie and other continental and English workers. These rays, which are found to proceed from the metal uranium, the newly discovered element radium, and some others, are also due to the discharge of infinitesimal particles from their surfaces. Reviving, as these investigations do, memories of the old corpuscular theory of light, they have created much sensation in the scientific world, and Prof. Thomson's announcement of his belief that a constant discharge of such particles proceeded from the sun, reaching and, as it were, bombarding the earth, produced a profound impression on his learned audience. The lecturer proceeded to explain the phenomenon of the *aurora borealis* on this hypothesis, and to add that a *return* current was in all likelihood proceeding from the earth to the sun.

Theosophists all the world over may imagine with what interest the students of the Secret Doctrine heard this scientific view. Surely the thoughts of all present must have turned to H. P. Blavatsky's teaching as to the sun being the heart of the solar system and the regular circulation of the vital fluid, the ebb and flow of vital electricity from and to that centre of the system's life, all of which is set forth in section VIII of "Secret Doctrine," Vol. I. I wonder how many will recall the prophecy contained in a footnote on page 681 (new edition) "Secret Doctrine," Vol. I., which reads:—"How true it is [Crooke's Theory of the Genesis of the Elements] will be fully demonstrated only on that day when Mr. Crooke's discovery of radiant matter will have resulted in a further elucidation with regard to the true source of light, and will have revolutionised all the present speculations. Further familiarity with Northern streamers of the *aurora borealis* may help the recognition of this truth." Never, I think, has prophecy been more truly justified, and it is a privilege for a very insignificant student of an epoch making book to put it thus on record.

NEW LIGHT ON THEOSOPHY.

"A Theosophist's Point of View," by Major James Albert Clark, president of the Theosophical Society, Washington, D. C., copyrighted by M. A. B. Clark, 913 M Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

The author, who is well known as a lecturer at the National Capital, Baltimore and elsewhere, found, as he states, a genuine desire in the questions put after each lecture, and on these inquiries he has built his context of 356 pages of brevier, thus giving the reader value for the price—one dollar the copy.

It is further stated that the work was not written for Theosophists, but for the "man on the street" who has heard just enough to wish to know more, and generally, his listeners at lectures have betrayed a uniformity of experience by stating "Theosophy as you teach it is not as we read it in the books."

This "Point of View" which forms the title is given as that of A Theosophist, thus limiting all conclusions to the author, and not to be considered as binding on the society. "It is not claimed," the author writes, "that it is truth absolute; it is truth as he discerns it. No better test of sincerity and fairness is known in the Theosophical estimate than one's willingness to submit his own views to a just comparison with others. This is his standing in court. On this he rests his case."

The 12 chapters seem to cover the main issues which pertain to the cult, and show a painstaking search. Meeting the occasional charge that there is agnosticism in the Second Postulate of the philosophy which sets some religious value on the unknown, the effort is reverently sustained throughout that the only God man can know is the divinity within.

The most thorough-going chapter deals with Reincarnation, and on lines not heretofore encountered in the treatises of the society. This is explained by the fact that the author having shown a scientific cast of mind in other directions apart from study of Theosophy, has investigated on new lines.

"Karma," the law of cause and effect, which is the broadest generalization in the system of thought compels rebirth, and the purpose is the Perfectibility of Man.

"The Genesis of Man"—differing from the traditional single pair, is in line with the conclusions of many of our advanced archaeologists which they label the "new theory," but which the author, by proof from ancient records, declares to be the oldest wisdom.

"The Psychic Powers Latent in Man" will arouse the antagonism of the Spiritualists and the Christian Scientists, but the attacks are not vindictive nor aggressive. They appeal to the reason, and admit the possibility of further revelations from the unexplained laws of nature.

"A Theosophist's Attitude to Christianity" will draw fire from the strictly orthodox and all upholders of creed and dogma, but the trend of reasoning is in accord with liberal Christianity.

"The Scientific Aspect of Theosophy" will awaken a lively interest in those who have always intuitively felt that the ancients knew more than they have been credited with.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

Founded by H. P. BLAVATSKY at New York in 1875.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they desire for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* to tread in this."

There are no dues.

The expenses of the Theosophical Society in America are met by voluntary contributions, which should be sent to A. H. Spencer, Treasurer T. S. in A., Box 1584, New York, N. Y.

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Secretary T. S. A., P. O. Box 1584, New York.